



News from **SALEM COUNTY** Office of Public Information

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SALEM COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING ENCOURAGES MEDICARE PART B BENEFICIARIES TO USE PREVENTIVE BENEFITS, TAKE THE WELLNESS PLEDGE

(Salem, NJ) --The Salem County Office on Aging today kicked off a public awareness campaign encouraging Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Part B to learn more about 19 free and reduced cost preventive care services now covered under the Part B program. The campaign is funded by a grant from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services (CMS) and the Administration on Aging (AoA). The Salem County Office on Aging is one of ten organizations that receiving funding for this initiative in New Jersey.

"Prevention is a key factor in maintaining a quality of life," said Freeholder Ben Laury, Chair of the County Social Services Committee. "The Office on Aging wants all Medicare Part B enrollees to know these important preventive health care services. The out-of-pocket costs for these vital services have been eliminated or greatly reduced for beneficiaries."

The multi-dimensional campaign includes print ads, brochures, posters and a wellness pledge card on which beneficiaries vow to call their doctor within 30 days to make an appointment for their first-ever annual wellness visit, a new, free service covered by Medicare Part B. The pledge cards will be distributed and collected by Office on Aging staff at presentations and fairs conducted throughout the County. The pledge cards will be mailed back to beneficiaries one month later as a reminder to make their appointment. Beneficiaries can also take the pledge on-line at www.wellnesspledge.nj.gov.

At the free annual wellness visit, beneficiaries and their doctors or health care providers develop or update a personalized prevention plan based on the beneficiaries' current health and risk factors. The visit includes a review of medical and family history; a list of current providers and prescriptions; height, weight, blood pressure, and other routine measurements; a screening schedule for appropriate preventive services; and a list of risk factors and treatment options.

In addition to the wellness visit, the 19 free and reduced-cost preventive services covered by Medicare Part B include a one-time “Welcome to Medicare” physical exam within the first 12 months of coverage, abdominal aortic aneurysm screening, cardiovascular blood tests, diabetes screening tests, glaucoma screening, bone mass measurement, screening mammography, screening pap test and pelvic exam, colorectal cancer screening, prostate cancer screening tests, HIV screening, diabetes monitoring and education, medical nutritional therapy, smoking cessation services, flu and H1N1 flu vaccination, pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination, and Hepatitis B shots for those at risk.

“The grant funds are also being used to promote and help low-income and limited-asset Medicare beneficiaries enroll in programs that pay some or all their Medicare Parts B and D premiums, deductibles, coinsurance and/or co-pay costs,” said Freeholder Laury. “Part B usually covers just 80% of approved doctor bills. A person on a Medicare Saving Program (which pays the Part B premium) can save more than \$1,000 a year, while individuals on a Low Income Subsidy (which pays some Part D prescription drug costs) save an average of \$3,900 annually.”

For more information please call the Salem County Office on Aging at 856-339-8622 or for additional information on getting help paying your Medicare costs, go to www.aging.nj.gov.